6 RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT A "GRANNY FLAT" DEMONSTRATION PROJECT IN OTTAWA-CARLETON

The Planning Committee met on 24 July 1984 and considered a staff report of 12 July 1984, on the Resolution to Support a "Granny Flat" Demonstration Project in Ottawa-Carleton.

The Planning Commissioner's report is:

Quote

On 10 Apr Planning Committee received a report which briefly described the Australian "granny flat" program. That report recommended that consultants be hired to lead a seminar on the potential for the use of granny flats in Ottawa-Carleton. The recommendation was approved and the seminar was held on 1 Jun. A list of participants is attached as Annex B and a summary of the proceedings on Annex B.

Significant interest in the granny flat concept was demonstrated by the participants at the seminar. The majority of the audience indicated approval for the concept of movable rental accommodation for senior citizens, particularly after hearing of the success of the Australian granny flat program and the results of Dr. Lazarowich's research in Waterloo.

Several key points emerged from the seminar:

- the number of senior citizens in Ottawa-Carleton is increasing and is projected to continue increasing;
- there is a lack of housing alternatives for active senior citizens;
- "granny flats" are an efficient and low-cost alternative to institutionalization for some senior citizens;
- the Australian granny flat program has been very successful both from the point of view of the Housing Ministry and the users of the program;
- research in Waterloo Ontario indicated that a similar program would be supported there.

Representatives of the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing indicated that the Province is interested in proceeding with one or more granny flat demonstration projects. Similarly the national office of Canada Mortgage and Housing has sponsored research on "Granny Flats" and is also currently looking to implement a demonstration program. Given this region's initiative in sponsoring the granny flat seminar and the need for alternative housing programs to meet the ever-growing housing requirements of the area's residents it is suggested that a demonstration project be established in Ottawa-Carleton.

Recommendation

1) That Regional Council adopt the following resolution requesting that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and/or the Canada Mortgage Housing initiate a "granny flat" pilot project in Ottawa-Carleton.

WHEREAS the number of senior citizens in Ottawa-Carleton is increasing,

AND WHEREAS there is a lack of housing alternatives for active senior citizens,

AND WHEREAS "granny flats" can provide a cost-effective and attractive housing alternative for some senior citizens,

AND WHEREAS there appears to be community support for a "granny flat" program,

AND WHEREAS the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Canada Mortgage and Housing have expressed support for the "granny flat" concept.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Regional Planning Committee requests the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and/or the Minister responsible for the Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation to establish a "granny flat" pilot project in Ottawa-Carleton.

2) That the Regional Housing Co-ordinator negotiate with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and/or Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation officials regarding the establishment of a "Granny Flat" demonstration project and report back to Planning Committee on the scope and implications of establishing such a project in Ottawa-Carleton.

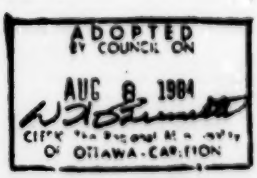
Unquote

Planning Committee Recommendation

The Planning Committee, on the advice of the Planning Commissioner RECOMMENDS THAT Regional Council approve of the staff recommendations as outlined in the report.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

E.Allen
Chairman



ATTENDANCE

Granny Flat Seminar

Name	Organization	Address	Telephone
S. Bickerstaff	Ont. MCSS	10 Ridsau St.	234-1188
M. Bachman		5-288 Byron	725-1467
G. Heggart	Rideau	North Gower	489-3314
A. Bouwers	Osgoode	Metcalfe	821-1107
S. Macintosh	Univ. of Ottawa	16 Waller St.	231-2395
C. Symes	Ottawa W. S. Cit.	1137 Wellington St.	728-6016
C. Bradshaw	RMOC	222 Queen	563-2645
C. Ladouceur	Modulex	383 Grebier	561-1212
M. Crawford	Senior Cit. Course	53 Queen St.	234-8044
S. Peebles	Jewish Social Services	151 Chapel	238-6351
D. Gibson	Twp. of Tiny	Suite 233, 67 Mowat	532-2883
J. Murray	Social Services	495 Richmond Rd.	728-4369
G. Jackson	Homes for the Aged	Porter's Island	237-5100
L. Davis	Good Com. Home	670 Albert St.	237-6879
L. Martineau	Glebe Center Inc.	950 Bank St.	230-5730
W. Schouten	Councillor Rideau	RR3 Richmond	489-3667
A. Wytenburg	RMOC Counc.	RR1 Richmond	828-5810
N. Tunnacliffe	RMOC Planning	222 Queen St.	563-2824
C. Burrows	Council on Aging	256 King Edward	232-3577
S. O'Byrne	Reg. Homes For the Aged	Island Lodge	237-5100
S. Corke	MMAH, Toronto	777 Bay, 2nd Floor	585-6502
P. Cridland	MMAH, Toronto	777 Bay, 2nd Floor	585-6505
B. Grandmaitre	Vanier	City Hall	746-8105
N. Walker	City of Ottawa	City Hall	563-3158
M. Aldwinckle		499 Wellesley Ave.	722-3100
M. Rywak	Councillor Ott-Carl	59 Cherrywood Dr.	820-4256
K. Ivony	Cumberland Township	RR3, PO Box 15, Navan	835-2526
T. Kehoe	City of Ottawa	City Hall	563-3127
R. Hasenack	City of Ottawa	111 Sussex Dr.	563-3210
A. Pope	RMOC	495 Richmond	728-0172
S. Wilder	City of Ottawa	City Hall	563-3181
R. Kolbus	City Living	214 Hopewell	563-3441
B. Kentfield	Goulbourn NR Housing	Box 1000, Stittsville	836-4864

Summary of the Proceedings of a Seminar on the Potential Use of Granny Flats in Ottwa-Carleton
- June 1, 1984 -

Sponsored by the Regional Municipality
of Ottawa-Carleton, Planning Department

THE PARTICIPANTS

MODERATOR	-	David Kardish - Housing Co-ordinator, Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton
Nel White	-	Team leader of a research and evaluation unit, Ministry of Housing, Victoria, Australia
Michael Lazarowich	-	Assistant Professor, School of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Waterloo
Werner Daechsel	-	President, Universal Health Consulting Inc.

A) Introduction

- David Kardish, Housing Co-ordinator, Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton

- Seminar sponsored by Planning Department - Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton under mandate to undertake housing research and to co-ordinate housing efforts of area municipalities.

- The granny flat concept fits nicely into a recommendation in the draft Regional Housing Statement for the Region to explore and co-ordinate residential intensification efforts.

- The granny flat option is one of several forms of housing being considered by the Alternate Housing Committee of the Regional Homes for the Aged.

B) Presentations

Background and operation of the Australian Granny Flat Program - Mel White

Background

- 75% of senior citizens home owners
- homes often too large and expensive
- lots too large - upkeep problems
- growing demand for institutional care
- lack of options between institutions and independence
- granny flat program developed to fill gap in range of senior housing

Implementation

- 2 years of discussion and amendments
- problem with zoning -- no more than one dwelling per lot
- granny flats designated "temporary hired buildings"

Design and Construction

- simple and small - bedroom, bathroom, living room, kitchenette
- wood frame construction
- assembled on site
- two designs: 1) square (6 x 6 metres)
  2) rectangular (8 x 5 metres)
- units placed in rear or side yard of existing house
- services connected to existing home
- all units constructed to Ministry specifications

Administration and Economics

- all units owned by Ministry of Housing
- units leased to occupant of main house
- applicant must know intended occupant
- no income or asset limits
- units allocated on wait-turn basis
- waiting period currently about 18 months
- applicant can privately finance a unit to reduce waiting period - Ministry buys back unit when no longer required - about 20% of the units are financed this way
- if unit is rented, rent equals about 20% of old age pension
- Ministry is responsible for maintenance
- maintenance costs amount to about $A35 per year per unit
- average length of occupancy is about 6-7 years
- most units relocated because of death of occupant
- relocation costs about $A7,000
- physical life of unit estimated to be 30 years
- program is very efficient compared with other seniors housing programs.
- construction, maintenance, administration costs are low
- critical factor in program economics is relocation cost and therefore average occupancy time.

Program Success

- tenant satisfaction very high - primarily because of links with main household
- tenants generally satisfied with design, size, features etc.
- some dissatisfaction among tenants due to fact that unit is leased in name of main household
- some tenants would prefer greater choice in unit design
- from Ministry point of view program has been successful because: 1) economics are very good; 2) program is very simple -- uncomplicated.

Unit Distribution

- about 1800 units allocated in Victoria
- 80% in metropolitan Melbourne
- 20% in rural areas
- urban/rural distribution partly reflects higher level of program promotion in city

The Practicality of Granny Flats in Canada - Michael Lazarowich

Background

- interest resulted from work with elderly and population projections
- most Canadian housing is two generational - not three generational
- we do not have the option of housing another person
- nobody in Canada had looked at granny flat idea

Research

- first looked at general feasibility - official plans, zoning, by-laws, legislation, financing etc.
- concluded it would be possible to implement
- next examined potential markets - types of users, hosts, attitudes of regulators, and home building industry.
- conducted survey in Waterloo area
- included four types of residential area: 1) downtown; 2) middle-upper class suburb; 3) new subdivision; 4) older suburban subdivision
- also included rural/urban fringe and completely rural areas
- sample included 300 people

Some Research Fundings

- people prefer square units - 20 or 25 feet square
- 75% in rural would live in one
- 60% in city would live in one
- 80% in rural would have one on their property
- 50% in city would have one on their property
- lower willingness in city is partly because the lots are too small to have a unit -- not that they did not want one
- people wanted high quality units
- municipal officials list zoning, servicing, lot requirements, fire and health regulations as major concerns -- not insurmountable barriers
- other municipal concerns: occupancy, parking, property, taxes, building codes
- research indicated general acceptance by consumers, hosts and municipal officials

Benefits

- reduced need for institutions - support care systems must be developed
- psychological and social benefits of retaining community
- economics of program are attractive
- makes better use of under-used sewer and water services
- housing without land development
- frees under-used single family homes for more efficient use by families

Future Work

- working with several groups to set up pilot project
- plans to build some units, put them on site, monitor operation

The Need for Relocatable Housing for Seniors in Ottawa-Carleton -- Werner Daechsel

Background

- need to look at life cycle of housing -- how people can most effectively use housing over their lifetime
- need to look selectively at what we will need
- presently seniors have dilemma -- either stay in large expensive house or move and leave friends and neighbours
- society pays high price when houses are underused -- infrastructure (schools, transportation) is also underused -- new infrastructure must be built elsewhere

Ottawa-Carleton data

- 95% of population which is going to be here in 1991 is already here
- 85% of housing stock that they are going to need is here now
- number of elderly and pre-elderly (50-64) is expected to increase
- 76% of seniors live in non-subsidized housing
- many elderly and pre-elderly are living in units that are larger than necessary (approximately 15,000)
- households have increased at three times the rate of population growth
- number of persons per household has dropped since 1961

A Program for Ottawa-Carleton

- franchised operation in agreement with municipality would be most viable
- current demands for government funds reduce possibility of public program
- programs should be highly controlled
- unit costs may be higher than previously indicated
- allowance for non-profit housing is now $45,000
- units probably would cost in that range
- producing low quality units may result in public rejection of the program
- we are in the process of doing a market survey on a pilot basis

C) Questions and answers

Q How large are the lots in Australia?
A White: An average lot in Melbourne would be about 60' to 70' by 120'.

Q What do the units sit on?
A White: Posts in the ground.

Q Is the servicing to the main house above or below ground?
A White: Underground.

Q Is a building permit required?
A White: Yes.

Q How does the cost of a granny flat compare with the cost of an average home in Australia?
A White: A granny flat costs about $A13,000. An average home would cost about $A35,000 without land.

Q It is unlikely that expensive ($50,000-$60,000) units would work in Canada. You (Lazarowich) are talking about a 500 sq. ft. unit for $18,000 to $20,000, is that right?
A Lazarowich: Yes. It would have dry-wall interior, 6 inch studs, stucco exterior, pitched shingle roof. My manufacturer said he could put it on site for $20,000.

Q What do you do about sewer and water?
A Lazarowich: Tap into water and sewer of main house. Costs about $2,500.

Q I think spot zoning would have to be used to allow objections to be heard.
A Lazarowich: People in the city usually said they would not mind if their neighbour had one; but thought their neighbour would mind if they had one. In rural areas there were few objections. Perhaps city people do not know their neighbours well.

Q Did you check to see how many people who said they would have one on their lot actually have enough room?
A Lazarowich: No. We have the information but have not analyzed it.

Q Are neighbours more amenable knowing a senior citizen will occupy the unit?
A White: Opposition by neighbours has not been a problem. If it works in a neighbourhood, it usually works well.

Q Do the units have to comply with zoning regulations - e.g. distance from boundaries?
A White: Yes.

Q Given that the population is aging and older people require more care, how will this affect the feasibility?
A Lazarowich: We have to develop better support care systems. Generally home support is cheaper than institutionalization. Volunteers can be used more extensively.
A White: Use of support services drops markedly when a person moves to granny flats. Seniors and hosts swap services.

Q Would the host have to be related to the occupant of the unit?
A Lazarowich: No, not necessarily.

Q What happens to property owners in terms of taxes and assessments?
A. Lazarowich: We received a wide range of response from officials. It can be dealt with in a variety of ways to suit a municipality.

Q Has the fact that there are only two designs and therefore neighbours know what is coming added to their acceptance?
A White: I do not think so. In fact standardization may go against them.

Q Would the fact that they are temporary be a factor in their acceptance?
A White: Yes, I think that has an effect. I should point out that under our zoning granny flats are a permitted use and therefore neighbours have no right to object or appeal.

Q Was there much neighbourhood opposition when granny flats became an permitted use?
A White: There was no neighbourhood opposition. There was discussion in parliament but the feeling seemed to be that the potential benefits would outweigh the potential problems. And because the program is run on a demand basis, if a neighbourhood did not like it, it would not go ahead.

Q The climate and other things are very different in Australia than here, do you think the program can be adapted to Canada?
A White: In a lot of cases it is simply a matter of accepting a new idea. All you can do is try it; if it does not work, it does not work.

Q Is the lengthy waiting period due to a lack of funds for the program?
A White: The program must compete for funds with other programs. 18 months is not a long waiting period in Australia. For public housing the wait may be six to ten years (16,000-20,000 people on waiting list).

Q What portion of people are financing units to reduce waiting periods?
A White: About 20%.

Q Is this a municipal, state or federal progam?
A White: State.

Q Do they have similar programs in other states?
A White: I believe so but I am not familiar with other states.

Q The residential lots in Australia are much larger than they are here. We are much more affected by what our neighbours do in their yards.
A. White: I agree.

Q Is the program monitored to ensure that the occupant of the unit is a senior citizen?
A White: We do not monitor it closely. It has not been a problem.

Q I think it is a great idea. What is the next step for Ottawa-Carleton?

A Kardish: The province has expressed interest, CMHC has expressed interest, Werner is doing a market survey in Ottawa. We could adopt a resolution coming out of the housing statement to lobby for a pilot project here.

A N. Tunnacliffe: At the staff level we could look at the effects on property taxes and various approval mechanisms.